

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, in light of the present amendment and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 23-26 are pending; Claims 1-22 are canceled; and Claims 23-26 are newly added. Claim 23 corresponds to an amended version of Claim 26 of parent Application No. 09/808,241. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

The specification has been amended to include U.S. priority information.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing discussion and present amendment, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for examination. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Customer Number

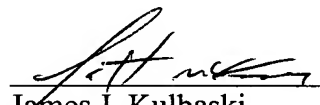
**22850**

Tel: (703) 413-3000

Fax: (703) 413-2220

JJK:SAM:KDP:dmr

I:\ATTY\KDP\24's\248549US\248549 PREL AM.DOC



James J. Kulbaski

Registration No. 34,648

Scott A. McKeown

Registration No. 42,866